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Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the involvement of civil society organizations other than non-governmental organizations and the private sector in technical cooperation activities: experiences and prospects of the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Involvement of civil society organizations other than NGOs and the private sector in technical cooperation activities: experiences and prospects of the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/2002/1).

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INVOLVEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS OTHER THAN NGOS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES: EXPERIENCES AND PROSPECTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

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ACRONYMS

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination (now CEB)
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination (formerly ACC)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MAP	Multi-Country AIDS Programme for Africa (World Bank)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNGLS	United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OBJECTIVE:
To examine the profile of Civil Society and analyse how the increased involvement and cooperation of its organizations in economic and social development programmes of selected United Nations entities can be better structured and expanded.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the past several years, due to the increasing role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the technical cooperation activities of the United Nations system, Member States have repeatedly called for the development of a policy framework and an appropriate mechanism at the regional and national level for collaborating with CSOs, in order to enhance their involvement and participation. Member States also came out strongly and advocated through Agenda 21 the need for new forms of participation in support of a common effort for sustainable development. In addition, other developments such as the globalization of trade, the progress of democratization and good governance, the advance of communication technologies, the request for a clear recognition of economic and social rights and entitlements, the eradication of poverty, just to mention a few topical issues, have opened the way to a more active presence of Civil Society.

The growing awareness of Member States of these new realities, compounded by the recognition of the United Nations system organizations, has brought to light the important contribution being made by CSOs in an effort by the system to build up the capacity of developing countries. This scenario underlines the emergence of Civil Society as a powerful actor on the national and international scene and highlights the need to face this factor with different approaches, proposals and solutions, based on a meaningful tripartite cooperation of governments, United Nations system organizations and CSOs.

The report focuses on this new evolution of partnership, the opportunities it offers for a forward-looking approach, the obstacles involved in the process and how to handle them. After the introduction to the report, chapter I attempts to define the notion of Civil Society and CSOs vis-à-vis the other non-State actors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, by demonstrating the specificity and capabilities of CSOs. Apart from the private sector, until recently there has been a tendency to identify CSOs with NGOs while distinct typologies are emerging within the former which deserve separate definition and consideration, hence an approach of their own. The report endeavours to clarify the existing haze between the two organizations.

In chapter II, the report concentrates on the relationship of CSOs with the United Nations system organizations at the operational level. It examines the existing ways and means for cooperation which need to be revisited and perfected in order to recognize that CSOs are not only the end beneficiaries of social and economic projects, but have become increasingly identified as partners and players along the process of design, implementation and evaluation of technical cooperation programmes as well as in implementing rehabilitation projects in post-conflict situations. If this assessment is correct–and consensus was expressed to the Inspector in his round of contacts–the United Nations needs to be better equipped conceptually and operationally, and to develop its outreach strategies to involve CSOs. It is also particularly important that the relevant legislative organs provide policy guidance and that secretariats establish directives and a flexible ad hoc framework in order to give the process an appropriate momentum.

Chapter III explores the role of CSOs in capacity-building, taking into account the tripartite nature of the cooperation (governments/United Nations system organizations/CSOs) by clarifying the role to be assumed by each party in order to promote and strengthen collaboration and further enhance the effectiveness of technical cooperation. Against this background, the following conclusions and recommendations are introduced.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Until recently, Civil Society has been considered predominantly as the beneficiary of development and technical assistance programmes and projects. A new situation has evolved, and Civil Society is recognized now in a new role as an active partner in the area of technical cooperation. This shift implies that sporadic involvement of CSOs is no longer sufficient, and the top-down approach to development needs to change.

RECOMMENDATION 1

CSOs should be involved in technical cooperation activities during all stages of programme planning, which includes design, sustainability, implementation/execution, monitoring and evaluation as well as follow-up (para. 55).

B. Because of the sheer number and the diversity of non-State actors, and their increased involvement in the activities of the United Nations for advocacy and technical cooperation, it is necessary for the United Nations system to have a framework to select and operate with CSOs. In fact, there is sometimes little evidence to assess claims of a CSO to represent a particular constituency other than that asserted by its leaders. It may furthermore happen that some self-proclaimed groups are "front" or "screen organizations" for sectoral interests. The Inspector is of the opinion that, although proposing standard guidelines and establishing strict criteria for selecting CSOs as partners and counterparts might not be seen as a priority or a requirement for some organizations, it is nevertheless a reality that the evolution of such cooperation has a considerable potential to increase in the very near future. This perspective requires that the United Nations be adequately equipped to respond to the challenge. Designating focal points is useful for obtaining centralized information instead of fragmented input. This is also true for non-State actors and government institutions working with the United Nations system. For this purpose it is recommended that:

RECOMMENDATION 2

(*a*) A standard framework, which is sufficiently flexible, could be usefully established to be adapted to the different situations and needs of United Nations organizations. This should include the assessment of the legitimacy of representation of any particular CSO, as has been provided for through the guidelines and selection criteria of NGOs, but specific to the nature of CSOs (para. 44);

(*b*) Organizations particularly active in technical cooperation without a focal point for CSOs should consider appointing one as part of the existing structure (para. 48);

(*c*) In connection with meetings of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination (formerly the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC)), consultations among focal points, either directly or through the existing network of the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UNGLS) as appropriate, could be envisaged when relevant issues on sustainable development are examined (para. 49).

C. Accountability and transparency are among the principles which Member States, reviewing and controlling bodies of the United Nations organizations require to be part of the project component. These principles should also be adhered to in cooperating with CSOs along the following lines:

RECOMMENDATION 3

(*a*) Accountability and reporting procedures must be taken into account in the partnership between the United Nations system organizations and CSOs (para. 45);

(*b*) Even in cases where such a requirement is already pragmatically satisfied in existing agreements, contracts and Staff Rules and Regulations, a policy should be recommended by the legislative organs to develop a common set of principles to guide United Nations system engagement with CSOs (para. 45).

D. CEB gives special attention to the development of partnerships between the United Nations system organizations and non-State actors, especially in the area of economic and social activities. CEB has an important role to play in coordinating inter-agency initiatives. It should therefore:

RECOMMENDATION 4

(*a*) Recognize and institutionalize such cooperation to be reflected permanently in its agenda of work and periodically report the results to the Economic and Social Council (para. 64);

(*b*) Sensitize its High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) in order that, when economic and social issues are considered, the role of CSOs is taken into account (para. 64).

E. Local CSOs are useful partners of the United Nations system in providing information. It is acknowledged that they are reliable channels of communication between the beneficiaries and the United Nations system. Furthermore, national CSOs are also one of the channels for enhancing democracy through participation and representation as well as "in providing assistance to government efforts to involve Civil Society in policy-making decisions".[1]

RECOMMENDATION 5

(*a*) In order to enable national CSOs to assume further their increasing roles as partners of the system, each organization should make it part of their objective to train and empower CSOs as well as strengthen their organizational structures in terms of legal and managerial capacity, and inform the legislative organs as appropriate (para. 57);

(*b*) The United Nations system organizations should assist women in general, and those in the developing countries in particular, with appropriate action on training and resource mobilization to enhance their organizational and managerial skills including information technology. Member States and donors should provide financial resources intended for this purpose (para. 88).

F. It has been proven during the last decade that CSOs play a prominent role in the capacity-building of their nation. They are the representatives of their members and know the needs and aspirations of their communities. The United Nations system is in fact using CSOs increasingly as implementing partners in technical cooperation. This development can be enhanced as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 6

(*a*) The prevailing informal and pragmatic cooperation with CSOs should be better structured through the definition of policy guidelines. This development will give further input to ongoing initiatives by the secretariats and should be translated into policy actions by legislative organs (para. 5);

(*b*) The financial autonomy of CSOs and their entities, including access to credit, should be encouraged by donors and recipient countries to reduce their dependence on sporadic donations and contributions which undermine their sustainability and potential effectiveness of action (para. 17).

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[1] A/56/326, para. 220.

G. The United Nations system needs to ensure that its staff at the country level engaged in technical cooperation activities are equipped to respond to the evolving changes of dealing with CSOs. For this purpose it is recommended that:

RECOMMENDATION 7

(*a*) Specific staff training is required in development programmes to be approved and implemented at the national level involving CSOs. The responsibility of training the trainers could also be envisaged (para. 83);

(*b*) For improvements in United Nations staff training, the United Nations System Staff College in Turin could be one appropriate structure (paras. 52 and 83)

H. Coordinating programme activities is not an easy task and requires clear commitments. The current common country assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) mechanism does not seem to respond fully to the newly assigned role of CSOs. Substantial room is left for improvement. More in-depth evaluations of the actual engagement of CSOs in existing United Nations mechanisms should be encouraged in order to give more weight to the Organization's commitment vis-à-vis CSOs. In order to respond to the need for improving and enhancing coordination within the United Nations system, the following step is recommended (paras. 76-78):

RECOMMENDATION 8

The existing mechanism at the country level has to be revised and amplified, shifting from limited and sporadic consultations to involvement of CSOs during the planning and execution process of technical cooperation activities in synergy with governments (para. 76).

I. Information sharing, communication and networking are essential for the United Nations organizations active in technical cooperation at the global, regional and country levels. The process should consider, whenever possible, ways and means to include CSOs. Web sites, in addition to the printed word and radio, appear to be appropriate tools for disseminating information and creating links, in particular with CSOs (para. 53).

RECOMMENDATION 9

(*a*) Those United Nations organizations dealing with economic and social development should be encouraged to include in their web sites selected information on CSOs engaged in technical cooperation activities for the benefit of CSOs in general, and in particular, for those which do not have a web site. For CSOs already equipped with a web site, it would be useful for United Nations system organization web sites to have these CSO hyperlinks imbedded, thereby making it possible to connect readers to the web sites of relevant CSOs;

(*b*) Major conferences, meetings, seminars/workshops organized by the United Nations system and of special interest to CSOs should be part of the appropriate printed word, radio and web site information.

INTRODUCTION

1. The input for the present report comes from several sources. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) suggested the item in view of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Work Programme 2001, but the situation seemed in any event timely for a review of the problem, as is evidenced throughout the document.

2. This exercise responds furthermore to the internal logic and continuity of the Unit's endeavours to explore the world of Civil Society. It is worth recalling that JIU recently produced two reports on NGOs[2] and one on the private sector.[3] Out of those three reports, CSOs are seen to emerge as a phenomenon. Because of their specificity, they deserve separate consideration. As a matter of fact, a more explicit diversification within Civil Society itself has suggested a focused approach to a component that has acquired a visibility and a prominence of its own, distinct from NGOs though covered by a single umbrella under which the private sector can, in principle, also be accommodated. With the present report, the Unit is therefore expanding its exploration on the cooperation between the United Nations system and non-State actors, and finalizing a triptych about one of the most topical and timely subjects now under scrutiny by Member States and the Organization.

3. The added value of preparing the current report is that full involvement of CSOs in technical cooperation programmes is advantageous, not only for the recipients, but also for governments in the sense that the foundations and structures of the State, especially in developing countries, are fortified politically, economically and socially.

4. A further element of support came from the legislative authority. At least three General Assembly resolutions[4] refer explicitly to the need for strengthening the capacity of Civil Society and NGOs involved in development activities. Also, the well-known Global Compact[5] is active in mobilizing the potential of Civil Society, not to mention the Millennium Declaration and its appeal to "give greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations and Civil Society in general to the realization of the Organization's goals and programmes".[6] Within the same context, it is worth mentioning General Assembly resolution A/56/L.33, dealing with Global Partnership. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the three components of Civil Society in recent documents and the terminology used in them are listed separately, while pertaining to the same context. The choice inspiring the present report thus appears further justified, even if it is clear that no contrary position should exist amongst non-State actors operating inside Civil Society, but rather that coordination, aimed at fostering cooperation in development policies, should be in place.

5. As transpires from the title, the subject of this review is focused on technical cooperation activities in which CSOs and their entities are involved. This, however, does not preclude engaging CSOs in key policy processes that lie outside formal programme and project frameworks and having agencies of the United Nations system creating and brokering space for CSOs to participate and make their voices heard. In the process, the report will attempt to clarify the notion of CSOs and their relevance to the engagement of the United Nations system in economic and social programmes. It will try to spell out the difference between the two main non-State actors in development–NGOs and CSOs whose notion goes beyond the traditional concept of NGOs, in spite of often having

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[2] *Working with NGOs: Operational activities for development of the United Nations system with Non-governmental Organizations and governments at the grassroots and national levels* (JIU/REP/93/1) (United Nations document A/49/122) and *Review of financial resources allocated by the United Nations system to activities by Non-Governmental Organizations* (JIU/REP/96/4) (United Nations document A/51/655).

[3] *Private sector involvement and cooperation with the United Nations system* (JIU/REP/99/6) (United Nations document A/54/700).

[4] A/RES/46/151, A/RES/50/120 and A/RES/53/192.

[5] Statement by the Secretary-General proposing the Global Compact on Human Rights, Labour and Environment in his address to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on 31 January 1999 (Press Release SG/SM/6881/Rev.1 of 1 February 1999).

[6] A/RES/55/2, p. 9, para. 30.

common denominators. The comparative advantages as well as obstacles in working with CSOs will be reviewed and areas of present cooperation and future potential will be highlighted. In this aspect, the existing United Nations mechanisms for cooperation, which include guidelines, criteria for selection and accountability procedures, will be analysed to ensure that the system is adequately equipped to respond to the increasing evolution and influence of CSOs. The report will also look at the role and contribution of CEB in strengthening and institutionalizing cooperation at the Headquarters and country levels. The status of focal points for CSOs and the possibility of networking for exchanging information will also be looked at. In addition, the report will analyse how the United Nations system utilizes the services of CSOs, in particular national CSOs, at the country level to enhance its long-standing objectives of capacity-building within the framework of technical cooperation. Where there is a lack of policy guidance to fortify such cooperation and partnership, it will make suggestions to legislative organs and/or secretariats as necessary to examine the possibility of improving such policy issues **(recommendation 6(a)).**

6. The participation of governments in this process is being allocated appropriate importance in accordance with the provisions of the relevant General Assembly resolutions. It is clear that central or local authorities are the main entrance through which the initiatives of the United Nations system and donors in the field of technical cooperation have to be channelled. They are normally the interlocutors even when CSO expectations and entitlements are the object of critical consideration. An ongoing dialogue between all the interested parties is essential and the United Nations–in the Inspector's opinion–is in a privileged position to act as a driving force and, when necessary, as an honest broker and facilitator. It can also help bridge occasional gaps and establish mutual trust as recommended in the report, in accordance with a concurrence of opinions that were expressed to the Inspector.

7. Here are a few observations on the methodology which was followed in the preparation of this report. Although the examination was system-wide, attention was mainly focused on those agencies and programmes having extensive projects of technical cooperation. Gathering of information was carried out by means of on-the-spot visits and missions to some components of the United Nations system and by the distribution of a detailed questionnaire in order to involve a wide range of interlocutors and to take advantage of broadly based points of view from relevant sources.

8. The Inspector wishes to extend his appreciation to all those who assisted him and is grateful for the valuable cooperation which he received in the accomplishment of his missions.

I. DEFINITIONS: THE NATURE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

A. CSOs relevant to the role of the United Nations in technical cooperation

9. The emergence–or, in several parts of the world, the re-emergence–of Civil Society is linked to two interlocking processes: the quest for more democratic, transparent, accountable and enabling governance and the increasing preponderance of market-based approaches to national and global economic management. These have resulted in redefining the role of the State and giving new and broader responsibilities to market and Civil Society actors in the pursuit of growth and welfare. "In this overall context, a vibrant Civil Society is critical to processes of democratization and empowerment."[7]

10. It is probably both the diversity and the increasing number of CSOs, both nationally and internationally, involved in economic and social development, that have discouraged the United Nations system from forming a clear definition. The organization does not yet have a clearly defined concept of CSOs which would go beyond their long-standing traditional relationship with NGOs. Most organizations do have definitions for their own use and purpose, and most agree that CSOs are separate from the State, from political parties, from quasi-governmental agencies and from profit-making entities. For this reason, two organizations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), do not consider the private sector as strictly as part of CSOs. It may happen, however, that CSOs carry out functions which are normally the responsibility of the public sector or, in some cases, are organized to pursue goals which do not exclude profit-making.

11. The difficulty in finding a widely accepted definition has been turned around by way of exemplifications. An incomplete list includes professional associations, cooperatives, village development communities, indigenous peoples, women and youth groups, networks for homework, religious and cultural associations, academic institutions, media and business promoters, and intellectual and research entities. The above listing proves, if need be, that CSOs and NGOs may differ also in the way they are financed through contributions from their members. It is also worth mentioning that members of CSOs are often not registered.

12. The Inspector, within the scope of this report, has attempted to clarify this situation by proposing the following definition with the recognition that more collective efforts are needed in developing practical ways of defining the nature of a CSO vis-à-vis an NGO.

A "Civil Society" is the result of different components of populations and communities, and refers to the sphere in which citizens and social initiatives organize themselves around objectives, constituencies and thematic interests. They act collectively through their organizations known as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), which include movements, entities, institutions autonomous from the State which in principle, are non-profit-making, act locally, nationally and internationally, in defence and promotion of social, economic and cultural interests and for mutual benefit. They intermediate between their constituencies/members, with the State as well as with United Nations bodies. They do this through lobbying and/or provision of services. Though belonging to the non-State actor category, they are different from the private sector and NGOs as they may not be registered, may replace the public sector, are not always structured and often their members are not officially recognized.

13. While the role of Civil Society is looked at principally in terms of promoting ideals and activities that represent citizens' interests and promote the public good,[8] the involvement of CSOs and their entities in the activities of the United Nations system organizations is twofold:

[7] A/51/950 of 14 July 1997, para. 208.

[8] Ibid., para. 209.

First, CSOs perform an advocacy function in economic and social decisions, in environmental issues, and in the fields of good governance, democracy and human rights. More and more, their qualified representatives are invited to insure a presence, though mainly as observers, at conferences, meetings, conventions and working groups. Support, including financial assistance, is increasingly granted to facilitate CSOs from developing and least-developed countries to participate in those events;

Second, they perform an operational role, that is involvement in project design and the implementation process of technical cooperation activities. Despite lack of an institutionalized framework and insufficient legislative authority on the part of the United Nations system, CSOs are beneficiaries and partners at the same time in many social and economic programmes.

1. Strengths

14. Exploration in view of the present report showed a concurrence of opinions on the strengths and therefore the advantages of working with CSOs.

15. CSOs are in a better position to reach out to the poorest and most marginalized peoples because their activities are mainly carried out in proximity to their members and clients. They can be more efficient than the public sector and more cost-effective in providing services, as they often act for targeted, well-defined sectoral projects, and even more so if the official local situation facilitates decentralization and delegation in the implementation of programmes. Greater leverage is thus afforded to the initiatives of Civil Society. CSOs are furthermore potentially useful tools for the dissemination of information about the plans and projects of the United Nations. In return, the Organization is informed about detailed aspects of needs and expectations along with the ability to adjust or introduce new technical cooperation initiatives. The complementarity between governments, the United Nations and CSOs serves the purpose of democratization and can acquire the support of local, less-favoured constituencies which are based at the popular grass-roots level. "Ensuring democracy requires good governance, which in turn depends on inclusive participation, transparency, accountability and the promotion of the rule of law. The United Nations assists Governments in strengthening their legal frameworks, policies, mechanisms and institutions for democratic governance through support to democratic governing institutions, such as parliaments, judiciaries and electoral management bodies; building human rights institutions and conflict resolution mechanisms and skills, strengthening local government and Civil Society participation in decision-making processes; strengthening public sector management, transparency and accountability; combating corruption, enhancing the role of the media; and improving electoral and parliamentary systems."[9] Therefore, CSOs not only constitute a potential partner for governments to develop their economies, but can also help understand and achieve governmental strategies. Furthermore, government ownership of a comprehensive development framework can be fully implemented only by reaching out to all the stakeholders. A concept to be retained is that satisfactory involvement of Civil Society implies the appropriate, national environment–namely, that policies, rules and conventions must be in place. United Nations agencies should therefore carefully review the comparative advantages of working with CSOs and make use of those advantages which would best serve the objectives of their technical cooperation activities.

2. Weaknesses

16. The full performance of CSOs implies internal structures, accountability, and transparency vis-à-vis their promoters, supporters and donors. In reality, it happens that they are seldom organized and scarcely empowered with sufficient administrative and managerial skills. Accountability is required, not only by their patrons but also by their constituencies, and for that reason their legitimacy in representing the community on whose behalf they claim to act must be assessed and verified. It is also essential that their non-political character be safeguarded. These are sufficient reasons for improving the

[9] A/56/326, para. 218.

present selection mechanism and for the United Nations agencies and programmes to establish a flexible standard framework to make dealing with CSOs accountable and transparent **(recommendation 3)**.

17. Other impediments lie in their dependence on external and voluntary contributions, which undermine their sustainability. Even in cases of well-defined and financed programmes, there remains the problem of assuring an autonomous follow-up after the planned implementation. Several of these shortcomings could be eliminated or at least reduced by replacing sporadic consultations and by involving CSOs in all stages of a project, from initial planning to successive phases, including implementation. More intense training programmes should also be envisaged for the benefit not only of CSOs in order to improve their capacity-building, relationship and cooperation with the United Nations system, but also of the Staff of the organizations who may need to refine their knowledge and practice in dealing with CSOs **(recommendation 6(b))**.

II. RELATIONSHIPS OF CSOs WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS

A. Overview of United Nations bodies cooperating with CSOs

18. The United Nations system organizations that were contacted by the Inspector clearly stated that their main interlocutors in technical cooperation activities were the governments, but also admitted that they had a long-standing working relationship with CSOs in view of a well-balanced tripartite process which involved Member States, the organizations and Civil Society entities. They recognized further that country ownership of their development strategies meant that committed governments and their people must be at the centre of their development processes. The level and type of relationships between governments, Civil Society and the business sector have changed due to new factors such as the globalization of economies, the decentralization of authority and trends in development assistance. As a result, the United Nations system's attention to the relevance of Civil Society has dramatically increased over the past number of years.

19. Areas of cooperation are specific to each organization. How some organizations cooperate with CSOs is summarized as follows:

20. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)—When DESA was created in 1998, one of its stated objectives was to improve its links to Civil Society. Since then, a concerted effort has been made to strengthen and diversify the Department's interaction with non-State partners with a potential for advancing work in economic and social development. A variety of institutional measures have been adopted to ensure the continued effectiveness of the consultative function. For example, each substantive division has designated at least one focal point with responsibility for the ongoing effectiveness of its relationships with its Civil Society partners. The central support mechanism is the Department's Non-State Actors Task Force, which provides a forum for the divisional focal points and coordinates departmental procedures for interacting with Civil Society. The Department is working with CSOs in a wide field of activities. Special attention is devoted to the environment, good governance, the empowerment of women, and the cooperation of CSOs with local authorities. Consultations are ongoing and are gathering momentum in view of the meetings of the special commissions, such as those on sustainable development and women. In these cases, the contributions from CSO representatives whose participation is supported are processed and passed on as input for the decision-making process. Listening to CSOs and exchanging messages are the policy. DESA action towards governments and CSOs is aimed at improving a tripartite cooperation in economic and social projects, in the elaboration of policies, in supporting initiatives that can help progress in macro and microeconomies of developing countries. One of the medium-term objectives of the section dealing with CSOs is to encourage, facilitate and enhance the participation of relevant elements of Civil Society in the activities of the United Nations, particularly in the economic and social sectors. Academia is also consulted as appropriate. DESA cooperates closely with research institutes and other academic CSOs throughout the world. For example, Project LINK is an international consortium that involves co-operation between DESA and some 80 academic and economic research institutions around the world. A relevant aspect of the Department's action is the possibility of supporting peripheral CSOs, which complement the local authority in areas that are distant and isolated. Furthermore, CSOs became full partners in efforts of policy-making in accordance with their specialization and information on topics of interest to the Economic and Social Council, participating in a variety of initiatives such as the Information and Communications Technology Task Force and many panels and round-table discussions.

21. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)—In 2000, UNCTAD established a Civil Society Outreach Unit with the following core functions: developing and implementing policies for public outreach; developing cooperation with NGOs, academia and parliamentarians; and promoting the integration of the gender perspective in the work of the organization. At the third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries in

Brussels (May 2001) the final declaration stated that development was a shared responsibility through genuine partnership including Civil Society and the private sector.[10] That is precisely a policy pursued by UNCTAD based on an already existing approach which involves CSOs as actors. Initiatives are taken according to specialization, following guidelines for representation, accountability and selection. UNCTAD recognizes that there is a greater need to respond to the expectations of Civil Society. Within this context, the holding of a global dialogue with Civil Society is considered, prior to and in preparation of the next UNCTAD Conference (XI; to be held in 2004). This dialogue would bring together Civil Society actors representing NGOs, parliamentarians, the private sector, trade unions, academics and faith-based development-oriented organizations.

22. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)–UNEP has had close links with CSOs since its inception. It categorizes "Civil Society" to include business and industry, civic and labour associations, NGOs and non-governmental research institutions. However, the organization's engagement with CSOs is entering a new phase as a result of the UNEP Governing Council's Decision on the Role of Civil Society,[11] whereby it requested the Executive Director to further the consultative process, including at the regional level, with governments, Civil Society, the private sector and other major groups on ways and means to enhance the active engagement and participation of Civil Society in the work of UNEP. It also requested UNEP to submit, before the end of 2001, a report on the outcome of these consultations, along with a draft strategy. The UNEP Governing Council alone can provide the guidelines for a new strategy for strengthening Civil Society's engagement in the work of UNEP.

23. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)—UNDP has, since the early nineties, recognized the importance of collaboration with CSOs not only as beneficiaries of technical cooperation, but as partners in the design and implementation of policies and programmes. The shift is from a vertical to a horizontal approach. It is important to negotiate what does and does not fit as an agenda for partnership and why. The CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator is an important forum at headquarters for doing so. UNDP has a focal point for dealing with CSOs and is convinced that greater leverage must be given to them and their legitimate aspirations. Hence the need to move from sporadic consultations to a deeper, more permanent collaboration. The UNDP approach encourages the diversification of operational and policy initiatives. Poverty eradication, capacity-building, reaching out to the less privileged social levels, recognition of CSO entitlements, developing advocacy skills, training CSOs as well as the United Nations staff who deal with them, are all meaningful examples. UNDP is presently finalizing a policy note on CSO engagement.

24. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)—As for the activities of UNFPA, the main beneficiaries are adult men and women, users of reproductive health services and commodities in developing countries. These activities have expanded access to affordable products and services. The grass roots-based CSOs, which in return benefit from such activities, could best deliver that type of assistance. Cooperation with CSOs, to be differentiated from NGOs, takes place at local and regional levels. Their contribution has been recently included in overall strategic plans. An important role is assigned to training and to initiatives to facilitate dialogue on policy issues and help to build capacity. Setting national standards to reach the population on education and health problems is one of the targets. UNFPA uses NGO guidelines for dealing with CSOs, and accountability is co-managed with country or regional offices.

25. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)—Throughout its history, UNHCR's relations with Civil Society have been very important–not only because of its key partnership with NGOs and increasing cooperation with the private sector, but also because the organization needs the help of communities in asylum countries to receive and integrate refugees. In order to promote global solidarity, UNHCR seeks the support and active involvement of Civil Society. Furthermore, Civil

[10] A/CONF.191/L.20.

[11] UNEP/GC.21/19.

Society plays an essential role in creating a more positive image of refugees. Organized Civil Society plays a fundamental role in the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers, and its increased participation in decision-making is promoted along with its role in setting standards in the area of protection of refugees and asylum-seekers. The role of CSOs is even more effective when their work is carried out in networks of CSOs and UNHCR. In this regard, UNHCR supports the work of protection networks that function in various countries and regions of Latin America and the Caribbean. At its forthcoming Ministerial Meeting of States Parties to the 1951 Convention and/or to its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, UNHCR will recognize the important role that Civil Societies play in protecting and assisting refugees and asylum-seekers, and in strengthening protection capacities. In this regard, UNHCR aims to examine further ways of strengthening partnerships for protection, not only with host and donor governments (including national legislatures), but also with NGOs, Civil Society, and refugees.

26. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)—In UNICEF, cooperation with CSOs takes place in three key sectors: health care, basic education, and water sanitation. The aim is to fortify the capacity of CSOs to be responsible and prepared to manage their problems. Partnership with CSOs is part of a tripartite process in which they are involved with UNICEF and governments for the co-management of projects. The country teams are usually the channels for consultation with national CSOs and when needed, they act in coordination with other entities interested in a project. UNICEF already includes CSOs in its information-sharing, communication and networking on technical cooperation programmes. A novelty is the emergence of CSO initiatives in proposing programmes jointly to UNICEF and local governments, and offering financial and structural contributions. The UNICEF policy empowers CSOs to make proposals for the participation and implementation of programmes. Where appropriate, UNICEF envisages extending training and capacity-building opportunities to CSO staff at the national level. Problems of accountability are solved through co-management with the local authorities. UNICEF is paying attention to the issue of how to ensure the transition process after the completion of a programme and to prepare CSOs to step in, absorb and eventually improve the acquired results. No guidelines exist for dealing with CSOs, but Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and pragmatic procedures are in place.

27. World Food Programme (WFP)—In the WFP, CSOs contribute and participate in the delivery and distribution of food. In traditional "Food-for-Work" projects, WFP has switched from big projects such as public work programmes, to smaller community-based projects which are directly related to the beneficiaries, such as the building of "feeder" roads and of schools. As a result of these changes in its approach to development and participatory approaches, WFP has greatly expanded its number of non-governmental implementing partners. In 2000, WFP worked with over 1,100 international and national NGOs, with a number of the local NGOs meeting the definition of a CSO set out in this report. WFP is particularly interested in working with local CSOs experienced in programming areas relatively new to WFP, such as assistance to persons living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

28. United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)—As a service provider, UNOPS looks at CSOs as an interesting partner. Projects are aimed at improving empowerment and capacity-building at national and local levels. Training is one of the targets, especially in programmes such as mine clearance in which local communities are likely to play an important role. Microfinance is another field of engagement to support economic development, to teach management of funds, to organize small businesses, and to generate income. Emphasis is placed on involving and raising the interest of small communities and villages, sometimes with a limited financial contribution from the beneficiaries. It happens that services are outsourced to CSOs, which receive compensation as implementing partners. The choice of projects is made in agreement with governments. Those projects with broad ramifications favour interaction with the population through CSOs and have relevance for project management and good governance.

UNOPS does not have specific guidelines or focal points for CSOs. The approach is pragmatic, and accountability, when required, follows standard rules. UNOPS underlines that the involvement of CSOs is particularly useful in complex situations. In the Africa 2000 Network Programme (an initiative that began in 1989 with the goal of promoting environmentally-sustainable livelyhoods), UNOPS works directly with CSOs across the region. UNOPS helps communities identify their own development priorities and then design their own projects for grant funding. Project proposals submitted for grant funding are selected through a CSO group review process. CSOs then receive and manage the funds directly to realize the projects. Based on this successful model, UNOPS set up the management structures for the UNDP Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme in the same way. Aside from designing and managing projects, CSOs play a major role in formulating the country programme strategy in each of the programme countries, which number more than fifty.

29. International Labour Organization (ILO)—ILO recognizes that CSOs have a valuable role to play especially in areas where its constituencies are less represented and not directly involved. They can greatly benefit from the advocacy skills and resources of civic associations particularly in development activities at the field level. Collaboration with CSOs is subject to the identification of areas where activities can be carried out while preserving the integrity of the ILO tripartite structure. At the national level, trade unions and employers' organizations often work with Civil Society associations in the pursuit of common goals in development partnerships and in promoting voice and action in areas of ILO concern, such as labour rights, gender, children, the disabled and the elderly. The agency does not have guidelines for dealing with CSOs. They do however, have focal points in different departments according to their specific competencies.

30. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)—FAO's concept of Civil Society is a broad one, including all non-State actors apart from for-profit businesses. Because of this approach, FAO does not feel the need for the development of a standard framework for technical cooperation with CSOs, given the great diversity of United Nations agencies and their fields and styles of activity on the one hand, and the great diversity of CSOs on the other. FAO has a long history of cooperation with community-based and rural peoples' organizations in the field of agricultural development and food security, and with NGOs/CSOs generally since the early 1960s. In late 1999, it published a new *FAO Policy and Strategy for Cooperation with Non-Governmental and other Civil Society Organizations*[12] to meet the challenge of cooperating with the rapidly expanding NGO/CSO sector. Based on broad consultation with NGO/CSO partners in all regions and with FAO technical units and decentralized offices, this document provides a framework for enhanced cooperation in four interrelated functional areas: information-sharing and analysis, policy dialogue, field programmes and resource mobilization. The framework was discussed at Regional FAO-NGO/CSO Consultations held in 2000, and translated into action plans for cooperation adapted to each different regional context. FAO has a specific unit for promoting NGO/CSO cooperation, which operates in collaboration with an Internal NGO/CSO Working Group made up of representatives of all headquarters units and regional offices.

31. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)—UNESCO has a flexible and comprehensive notion of Civil Society. NGO partners of UNESCO include academic institutions, scientific corporations, professional associations, religious and cultural associations, intellectual and research entities, women and youth groups, unions and local associations, without exclusion of the private sector. For UNESCO, the "Civil Society agents" are those actors who have a role to play in democratic relations in the public realm, promoting principles and values enshrined in the organization's constitution. Cooperation with the Civil Society is developed predominantly with NGOs and in fact the guidelines applied are those established for NGOs without a specific focal point for CSOs but extended to the organized Civil Society entities. Furthermore, other guidelines are also being used in the organization,

[12] D/X2214E/1/11.99/8000, Rome, FAO, 1999.

at the secretariat level for the recognition of Civil Society entities such as the Associated Schools Network, composed of some 7,000 schools in 172 countries implementing specific projects in education. This procedure is confirmed in article VI of the directives concerning relations with foundations and bodies representing Civil Society and the private sector. UNESCO recognizes that CSOs can be a valuable asset in mediation between the State and local authorities and international organizations. They can contribute to the national knowledge of economic and social realities and convey messages on social evolution and democratization. CSOs are involved in meetings dealing with issues of interest to them and are beneficiaries of projects on training and capacity-building.

32. World Health Organization (WHO)—For WHO, being a social-sector agency, the involvement of CSOs is mainly at the country level. Cooperation with CSOs is not new to the organization, but due to the increased influence of non-State actors in public health programmes, which made the involvement of CSOs even more necessary. Apart from its long-standing partnership with NGOs which have been associated successfully in the implementation of many multisectoral health projects, WHO is seeking a closer partnership with non-State actors, especially CSOs, in order to achieve sustainable health outcomes. For that purpose, a new Civil Society Initiative was launched in 2001 in view of assessing the current relationship with CSOs, reviewing the appropriate mechanisms to foster interaction and proposing a wider framework for more effective action. Tentative fields for the Initiative to be further assessed and developed include a data and knowledge base review; analysis of operational and strategic issues; compilation of best practices; proposals for collaboration; and information, communication and training programmes. WHO is thus responding to the increased participation of CSOs both in national governance and in policy-making at global levels.

33. International Maritime Organization (IMO)—IMO aims, within its Regional Programme, to establish partnerships with environmentally committed interest groups and with local governments in addressing coastal and marine management problems. Four key approaches are utilized to engage Civil Society groups in coastal management; development and implementation of communication strategies; consultation and participation in the project cycle; collaboration in the implementation of project activities; and training in relevant areas of coastal management. For good results management, participatory activities should be focused simultaneously at the community level; stakeholders and institutions at the national level. CSOs have a vital role in natural resources management. The indigenous knowledge of Civil Society groups with regard to coastal and marine environments is an important input for planning and decision-making at the local, national and regional levels. IMO follows UNDP guidelines, internal rules and regulations for management and accountability for cooperation with CSOs. Its Technical Cooperation Division is promoting partnerships with regional and international CSOs in the maritime sector.

34. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)—Reflecting the continuing needs of developing countries for a modern and effective intellectual property system, and to enable the intellectual property user community to effectively use this system, the WIPO cooperation for development programme traditionally keeps close cooperation links with Civil Society and attaches great importance to their capacity-building. The user community includes industry, in particular Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), research and development institutions, academia, artists, musicians, writers, composers, collective management societies, inventors and trade associations, attorneys, associations of intellectual property rights owners, and consumer associations. Numerous WIPO training activities are supported and assisted by Civil Society institutions, such as training institutes and intellectual property associations, which regularly cooperate with WIPO by hosting or co-organizing training sessions. Moreover, WIPO cooperates with academic institutions and universities by providing training for professors in the field of intellectual property law. The WIPO World Wide Academy works closely with a large number of cooperating universities, research institutes, industrial property and copyright offices, and is seeking to further increase this collaboration in

the next biennium. The WIPO SME programme maintains constructive links with relevant Civil Society institutions to encourage dynamic linkages amongst universities, research and development institutions, financing and venture capital institutions, and other SMEs.

35. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)—UNIDO cooperates with CSOs in a wide spectrum of industry-related activities such as the environment, energy, small and medium industry development, entrepreneurship (including women), investments, technology, rural industry, standardization, and the quality of production. It is agreed that CSOs should not be confused with NGOs. An important role can be played within the context of the dialogue between the public and the private sector in convincing governments of the benefits of working with CSOs which should be brought into the negotiation process. In general, intensive cooperation takes place at the different project stages.[13] The UNIDO policy is guided by the recognition of the advantages of working with CSOs: in proximity to their constituents, flexibility and a high degree of motivation. On the other hand, weaknesses lie in their diversity, lack of organization and irregular funding. For these reasons, UNIDO puts great effort into the capacity-building of CSOs. Their training is intensely developed. Resort to academia is frequent. General guidelines are included for the formulation of integrated programmes. UNIDO has a focal point for CSOs.

36. The World Bank has increased its engagement in global consultations with Civil Society in order to allow more proactive interaction between itself and CSOs in addressing specific issues. Having recognized that Civil Society is an important actor in development, the World Bank has improved its process of consultation with CSOs to listen to their suggestions and then incorporate them into its initiatives. Particular attention is devoted to operational collaboration at the country level in the formulation of Country Assistance Strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategies. New structures have been put in place to improve the involvement of CSOs in development programmes. An NGO and Civil Society Unit of Social Development has been established and specialized staff members are assigned to work with Civil Society in many resident missions. The strategy of the World Bank includes:

Enhancing assistance to governments to improve the quality of the participation of Civil Society in the World Bank's lending and non-lending instruments;

Consolidating the civic engagement agenda at the macrolevel, particularly in country policy-making and budgetary processes;

Advancing the debate on the role of Civil Society and multilateral institutions in the global context. Renewed attention is devoted to participation in the Poverty Reduction Strategy to support country frameworks for action to evaluate the poverty impact on national strategies and development assistance. A Civic Engagement and Participation Group of the Social Development Department has been newly created for that purpose. Valuable information about the World Bank's cooperation with Civil Society is provided in the section on "Operational Collaboration at the Country Level: Regional Highlights", in the report *World Bank-Civil Society Collaboration – Progress Report for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001*.[14]

37. Other areas of recognition are the efforts being made by the regional commissions of the United Nations in developing partnerships with CSOs that are directly related to the economic and social development of their regions. The status of the contributions of the commissions is as follows:

38. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)—ECA has made a remarkable effort by taking concrete action and launching the African Centre for Civil Society in 1977. The Centre addresses the critical issues of how NGOs and CSOs could play a more active and effective role as

[13] An interesting example of this is the pilot project for Africa concerning Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Senegal, discussed in UNIDO report YA/RAS/01/408 *Screening Form for Regional Integrated Programmes. Programming Exercise for Agro-industries in West Africa: Upgrading capabilities of intermediary Civil Society Organizations* (no date).

[14] See page 11.

intermediaries promoting the interest and priorities of their grass-roots constituencies. It will develop and offer core programmes to train African Civil Society leaders, and ongoing technical advisory services. The Centre is located in the Development Management Division, and is designed to enhance Civil Society participation in development and governance. During the African Development Forum Civil Society Organization consultations meeting held in 2000 (prepared by ECA), it was recognized by the participants that CSOs have taken initiatives that have already met important leadership challenges. These include programmatic engagement, whereby community-based organizations work with government structures in providing: basic medical and social services; social mobilization for the HIV/AIDS pandemic; human rights protection in that they play a major role in fighting against discrimination and the ill-treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS; and in international networking, where CSOs have shown great strength. They are able to network, learn lessons quickly, cross-fertilize and apply pressure across countries. International pressure is often exercised on many levels, including national political leadership, international institutions, pharmaceutical and medical establishments, and others.

39. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)—Another sound example is the cooperation of ECLAC with governments, United Nations system organizations and CSOs during a regional conference organized by ECLAC in 2001 on "Social capital and poverty reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: towards a new paradigm". The conference was co-sponsored, inter alia, by the Governments of France and Italy; the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank.

40. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)—ESCWA has CSOs under its sector of affiliations which detail its cooperation with Civil Society institutions. It participated in a Workshop on Women in the Arab Non-Governmental Organizations organized in cooperation with the Arab Network for NGOs (Al-Shabaka). Within this context, ESCWA provided assistance and participated in meetings of a number of local NGOs dealing with women and gender issues, such as the Tunisian Mothers' Association. The Commission also participated in the Business and Investment Forum for Renewable Energy Sources in the Arab Region, and an ESCWA representative presented a paper entitled "*Globalization and future labour markets*".

B. Existing mechanism for cooperation

41. Almost all United Nations system organizations involved in technical cooperation have elaborated guidelines for action with NGOs and the private sector. However, they do not have explicit guidelines for cooperation with CSOs. Some use the existing guidelines for relations with NGOs and the majority of organizations enter agreements on the basis of an MOU drawn up by each agency on an ad hoc basis. Such MOUs, in principle, contain the broad-based participation of CSOs in the programming process as well as some policy issues. Furthermore, some use the exchange of letters, minutes and joint communiqués, while others issue contracts based on current organizations' rules and regulations. There are also organizations which have formal guidelines related only to the procedures for granting consultative status to CSO. (UNIDO and the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP)). In 1999, the NGO and Civil Society Unit of Social Development of the World Bank prepared general guidelines for its staff to conduct consultations with CSOs. The guidelines are intended to provide assistance to the World Bank staff in facilitating consultations with CSOs on projects, policy, and investment lending. An additional tool, the World Bank's *Working Document*[15], published in 2001, expands on these issues in greater detail and adds further background information and examples.

42. The findings reveal that some organizations are in favour of specific guidelines (UNIDO, UNEP), while others have a preference for flexible and pragmatic procedures. WIPO believes that the possibility of establishing guidelines for cooperation with CSOs should not be excluded in its future activities.

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[15] Paula Lytle, William Reuben and Najma Siddiqi, ***Skills Enhancement and Team Building. Consultations with Civil Society: A Sourcebook–Working Document***, NGO and Civil Society Unit, SDV (August 2001).

C. Criteria for selecting CSOs as partners and counterparts

43. Most of the organizations visited by the Inspector do not yet have established criteria for selecting CSOs as partners. On the contrary, all have methods of according consultative status to NGOs, after approval by their legislative organs or through acceptance of the established Economic and Social Council procedure. Some organizations use the criteria for NGOs to cooperate with CSOs; others have developed MOUs according to the project. The multiplicity of non-State actors does not allow a single approach for dealing with all types of relationships. What does matter is the unity of purpose consisting of enhancing the participation of the United Nations system in the interest of Member States and their peoples.[16]

44. The Inspector is of the opinion that, although proposing standard guidelines and establishing criteria for selecting CSOs as partners and counterparts might not be a priority for some organizations in their cooperation with CSOs, it is, however, a reality that the evolution of this cooperation has a huge potential for growth in the very near future. At a certain point therefore, having a standard framework which could be adapted to the different situations and needs of the organizations based on the experience of cooperation with NGOs and the private sector (see annex III of A/56/323) but specific to the nature of CSOs, would be useful in order to facilitate dealing with them **(recommendation 2)**. Such a standard framework should also include procedures for accountability, reporting and determining their legitimacy to represent their constituencies. This will no doubt help CSOs, especially at the country level (and dealing with a plurality of United Nations organizations all at the same time) to have a general understanding of the benefits and requirements of cooperation with the system. It will also help CSOs to understand what is expected of them when considered as partners by the organizations.

45. Standard accountability and transparency are one of the requirements of the reviewing and controlling bodies of the United Nations system. Member States repeatedly requested that these requirements be part of the project component. An effort, therefore, needs to be made to take into account such a procedure in the partnership with the system. Accountability and transparency should also guide CSOs towards their own constituencies. Where such a practice is already included in existing agreements, legislative organs should recommend a policy in order that a common set of principles be followed by the organization in their dealings with CSOs **(recommendation 3).**

D. Focal points for coordinating CSO activities

1. Establishing focal points

46. Cooperation with CSOs and their increased participation in the technical cooperation activities of the United Nations organizations, both at Headquarters and at country level require more focused attention by the system. Relationships between agency programmes and national, regional and global CSOs are intensifying. The United Nations is aware of the fact that it has not kept up with the recent surge in Civil Society activism. One of the goals of all who deal with non-State partners is to maximize their input into the substantive work of the system by taking advantage of both their expertise in certain areas and the very nature of many organizations, which would enable them to identify emerging trends with great accuracy.

47. During his inquiries, the Inspector remarked that some of the organizations with major technical cooperation programmes had established a separate unit as a focal point to coordinate collaboration with CSOs. These were: DESA, FAO, ILO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNIDO and WHO. The World Bank had assigned specialized World Bank staff members to work with Civil Society. In the early 1990s, the Bank did not have any such staff, but, by the end of fiscal year 2001, the World Bank had appointed Social Development/Civil Society Specialists and NGO Liaison Officers in about 70 resident missions.[17] UNDP has had an established unit dedicated to NGOs since 1986, which in 1993

[16] A/56/326, para. 301.

[17] *World Bank-Civil Society Collaboration–Progress Report for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001*, p. 2.

became known as the Civil Society Organizations and Participation Programme to reflect the UNDP policy of broadening engagement to include the full range of Civil Society actors in its work. As part of UNDP restructuring in 2001, the Unit is now called the Civil Society Organizations Team and is anchored within the Bureau for Strategic Partnership and working in close matrix fashion with the Bureau for Development Policy. It is responsible for policy direction and support to the various divisions at UNDP headquarters and country offices in engagement with CSOs. At the regional level, the Bureau for Development Policy's CSO and Poverty Advisors have been outposted to the regions to provide timely policy support to country offices. At headquarters, the regional bureaux have a system of CSO focal points.

48. Designating United Nations focal points for certain aspects of the organizations with system-wide relevance is useful for obtaining centralized information instead of fragmented information from scattered sources. Furthermore, it could be beneficial for coordination purposes inside the competent agency, with the United Nations system at large and other interested external actors. The Inspector therefore is of the opinion that, if not already in place, the possibility of establishing a focal point should be explored as part of existing structures.

49. In connection with CEB meetings, consultations among focal points, either directly or through the existing network of UNGLS as appropriate, could be envisaged when relevant issues on sustainable development are examined **(recommendation 2(c)).**

2. Networking

50. In 1999, the Administrative Committee on coordination (ACC) (now CEB), while discussing the challenges of globalization and how to meet them, indicated common areas of action within the context of effective relationships, inter alia, through issue-based networks, and urged deeper relations with Civil Society.[18] Furthermore, during its meeting in early 2000, the executive heads decided to strengthen arrangements for a continuous exchange of information on experiences concerning interaction with Civil Society, and to draw lessons from best practices for the benefit of the system as a whole.[19] The World Bank took the initiative and prepared the first major launch of the Global Development Gateway in 2001. The Gateway is web-based portal http://www.developmentgateway.org, bringing together other donors, governments, businesses, and CSOs to exchange information, seek common goals, and build partnerships to promote development, and to address poverty worldwide. Due to the often isolated nature of vast segments of Civil Society in the developing world, the potential value to be derived from Internet connectivity and access to computer technology is especially important.[20]

51. The Inspector fully supports these initiatives as suitable for exchanging information at the inter-agency level and with non-State actors to give fresh input to the elaboration of common policies for cooperating with CSOs.

52. Contributions to this purpose may include the publication of a comprehensive list of selected and recognized CSOs with their postal and web site addresses. The list could be completed later with providing more information on the profile and types of activities. Such a working tool would improve communication between the United Nations organizations and CSOs, as well as among CSOs. National CSOs without a web site could be assisted by the United Nations system to be gradually equipped with one. The design of appropriate kits for United Nations staff as a guide to training programmes in favour of CSOs could be part of the activities of the United Nations Staff College in Turin, devoted to the sector **(recommendation 7(b)).**

53. Information-sharing, communication and networking are essential for the United Nations organizations active in technical cooperation at the global, regional and country levels. The process should consider, whenever possible, ways and means to include CSOs. Web sites appear to be appropriate tools for disseminating information

[18] E/2000/53.

[19] E/2001/55.

[20] *World Bank-Civil Society Collaboration–Progress Report for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001*, p. 24.

and developing links with CSOs. The United Nations organizations dealing with economic and social development should be encouraged to include in their web sites selected information on CSOs engaged in technical cooperation activities for the benefit of CSOs in general, and in particular, for those which do not have a web site. For CSOs already equipped with a web site, it would be useful for United Nations organization web sites to have hyperlinks, thereby making it possible to connect readers to the web sites of relevant CSOs. But when they have no access to the Internet, other, more accessible means, such as the printed word and radio, should be used and developed **(recommendation 9)**.

E. Partnership and participation of CSOs

54. Interaction between the United Nations and CSOs has been going on in many fields of activity carried out by the system, often in informal and pragmatic ways. However, the vibrant emergence of CSOs in recent times has changed the pattern of the relationship. The traditional mode of cooperation was that Civil Society of developing countries was considered predominantly as a beneficiary of the programmes and projects of the United Nations system. Hence, in most cases the beneficiaries were only consulted occasionally or only involved in the launching of programmes and projects. The system lacked transparency and accountability to its beneficiaries as well as to its donors. Projects were implemented without consideration of their sustainability, and without a sound mechanism to check the impact and results of the activity. Occasionally, the United Nations organizations would initiate a project, implement it directly or through another United Nations system organization, and/or external subcontractor. Once the task was accomplished, the follow-up was weak or non-existent. The problem remained to assure that the ensuing result would be preserved and possibly improved. The solution to these problems can be offered through a broad partnership approach to development by strengthening the consultative mechanism led by the government, but with the participation of all the interested parties of which the CSO is an essential component. The process implies a mutually agreed division of labour and consequently CSOs should have a recognized and assigned role.

55. The emergence of CSOs suggests changes in this pattern of cooperation and introduces a new approach requiring CSOs to be partners in the selection, preparation, appraisal, approval, implementation, supervision, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up of programmes and projects. This new development challenges the United Nations structure and Member States to involve CSOs more efficiently. The reform process of the United Nations system recommends in fact that the process be integrated into the policies and procedures of the Organization in a transparent way. Furthermore, the system is gradually benefiting from the conviction that it is comparatively advantageous to work with CSOs. Significant concrete examples, inter alia, are the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) and the General Conference on HIV/AIDS. On this subject, it is pertinent to mention the report of the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council 2001, which stated that the challenges for the coming biennium included "expanding Civil Society in the response through enhanced partnership with associations of people living with HIV/AIDS, community-based organizations, religious groups, non-governmental organizations working in relevant sectors and the private sector".[21] Also, World Bank-Civil Society collaboration has increased notably in addressing HIV/AIDS concerns. Throughout fiscal 2001, the World Bank committed US$ 501 million for new HIV/AIDS prevention and care efforts. In September 2000, through its Multi-Country AIDS Programme for Africa (MAP), and in partnership with UNAIDS against AIDS in Africa, the World Bank made US$ 500 million in credits available to any African country that met simple eligibility requirements, including eligibility for International Development Association credits. Members of Civil Society will be active in implementing the MAP projects.[22] Furthermore, the United Nations Information and Communication Technology Task Force (UNICT) is worth mentioning. Through UNEP cooperation with CSOs such as the World Wide Fund for Nature and the World Conservation Union, the programme has helped in capacity-

[21] E/2001/82.

[22] *World Bank-Civil Society Collaboration–Progress Report for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001*, p. 11.

building and information dissemination in various countries.

56. The above examples are just some of the cross-cutting sectoral initiatives which involve the United Nations system organizations, CSOs, the private sector and governments of developed and developing countries. There are other timely issues such as poverty eradication, gender equality and the empowerment of women, which could benefit from such a cross-cutting partnership. (Analysis of the existing tools and perspectives are contained in chapter III of the report.) During the World Summit for Social Development, held in 1995 and which involved the participation of hundreds of CSOs, governments committed themselves to the goal of eradicating poverty as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind.

F. Enhanced role of local, national and international CSOs

57. The variegated fields of activity of CSOs and their entities underline their potential and complementarity with the goals and programmes of the United Nations. At the local level, they can provide information as representatives of their communities; be reliable channels of communication between the population and the system; assess the needs of a community and help design programmes; and play a part in the implementation and follow-up of projects during and following the departure of the United Nations. Their role is also effective in the improvement of good governance. Good governance extends beyond the State, encompassing organizations in the private sector and in Civil Society. It refers to a new type of relationship between the State and Civil Society at national, regional and local levels. This premise should guide the formulation of strategies for rehabilitation and social sustainability programmes from their inception. In order to improve performance in these functions, local and national CSOs need to be trained and empowered, and their organizational structures strengthened in terms of administrative and managerial capacities **(recommendation 5)**.

58. It is worth recalling that CSOs are also active at international and academic levels. Institutions such as Chambers of Commerce and Industry, federations of industry, trade unions, professional and manufacturers' associations, academic foundations, to mention just some of the best-known and more active players, can be useful interlocutors of the organizations. The fact that CSOs are less bureaucratic than public institutions is an advantage. Their lobbying power and the capacity to regroup a large number of stakeholders are also an asset.

59. The analysis suggests that coordination among the different actors of CSOs could be useful. The appropriate mechanism can be found within each agency according to types of technical cooperation activities, but the structures of CEB also offer the possibility of establishing a comprehensive view of the involvement of Civil Society in its diverse expressions at the local, national, and international levels so that its involvement is known, coordinated, and operationally more effective. Inter-agency consultations, operational collaboration with CSOs, meetings, workshops, and conferences on technical cooperation are equally appropriate environments for opportunities of togetherness and participation.

G. The role of CEB in strengthening the relationship between the United Nations system and CSOs in technical cooperation

60. Cooperation with Civil Society has been a constant concern in former ACC meetings. As demonstrated by the significant title of one of the items of the 1997 Annual Overview report, namely "The relationship between the United Nations system and Civil Society, including the private sector: handling the global agenda with non-State actors",[23] CEB has encouraged agencies and programmes to devote increased attention to cooperation with Civil Society. The Secretary-General himself has recalled that a central concern of the reform process is the adjustment of the system to the changes that are taking place in the national and international environment.[24] He invited CEB members "to tap the vibrant energy of the Civil Society for more effective partnership with non-State actors".[25]

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[23] ACC/1997/20, para. 4.

[24] Ibid. para. 5.

[25] Ibid., para. 8.

61. The policy discussed and approved by CEB has resulted in several meetings and documents. The process of cooperation with CSOs has gained momentum and volume. It is in favour of avoiding artificial uniformity and encourages arrangements for the participation of CSOs in substantive negotiations on issues to be submitted for approval to governing bodies and legislative organs.

62. The following are some examples of suggested ways for cooperation that were taken into consideration by CEB: extending informal consultation and access to its machinery at the appropriate working level; supporting capacity-building, at national and local levels, of Civil Society groups capable of contributing to development; using the catalyst role of the United Nations in support of governments in their dialogue with Civil Society; increasing consideration of issues of accountability, financial transparency, and representation; criteria to assess CSO competitiveness in view of the selection of partners; developing training of both CSOs in management, negotiation, and the evaluation of results; and United Nations staff refining its capacity in dealing with Civil Society.[26] The United Nations Staff College in Turin is indicated to be an appropriate institution for this task. It is also important that such sensitization be incorporated in the staff briefing and training programmes of each individual agency.

63. Further elements of information are contained in a recent paper prepared by ILO and discussed during the former ACC session in early 2001.[27] The choice of ILO was prompted by the presence of Civil Society in the agency because of its tripartite structure (governments, employers and workers organizations). The paper starts from the viewpoint shared by the Inspector, namely that the complementarity between the United Nations and Civil Society is at the heart of the relationship, and recognizes that Civil Society in its different components, embodies "aspirations and values not to be confused with business interests" and has organizational characteristics of its own to justify a distinction from NGOs. The ILO paper is suggesting, inter alia, modalities to tap the potential of Civil Society, spanning involvement in implementation of plans of action agreed in global conferences and summits to consultative roles in inter-agency bodies.[28]

64. The Inspector commends the efforts of CEB to strengthen and institutionalize the relationship among the United Nations system organizations and CSOs, and supports the idea that CEB should continue to give special attention to the development of partnerships between the United Nations system organizations and non-State actors. The United Nations system repeatedly stressed the importance of involving CSOs as partners, especially in the area of economic and social activities, in response to the concerns of the international community. In this respect, CEB has an important role to play in coordinating the efforts by which such cooperation will be better structured and enhanced. It should therefore, within its High-Level Committee on Programmes, recognize and institutionalize such cooperation, and periodically report the results to the Economic and Social Council **(recommendation 4)**.

[26] E/1998/21, paras. 42-45.

[27] E/2001/55.

[28] Ibid.

III. CSOs AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

A. Capacity-building in the light of cooperation with CSOs

65. The UNDP glossary defines "capacity development" as follows: "the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and countries develop, enhance and organize their systems, resources and knowledge, all reflected in their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives. Capacity development is also referred to as capacity-building or strengthening." While the above UNDP definition gives the broader coverage of capacity-building, in 1999, a report prepared by the Inter-Agency Consultation on Operational Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations defined the "capacity-building concept" in the light of cooperation with CSOs as follows: "can be defined as an explicit intervention that aims to improve an organization's effectiveness and sustainability in relation to its mission and context and encompasses a wide range of activities that contribute to improving CSO performance and sustainability."[29]

66. The organizations visited by the Inspector confirmed that at the project level, there was intensive cooperation with CSOs for the benefit of capacity-building. This trend was encouraged by the agencies for the purpose of assuring the success of projects and their follow-up after the completion of the specific United Nations programme.

67. It has been proved during the last decade that CSOs play a prominent role in capacity-building at the national level. They are not only the interpreters of their constituencies' needs and aspirations, but also the link and at times, mediators, between their communities and other external development actors and the United Nations organizations. As a consequence, the United Nations is using CSOs increasingly as implementing partners in technical cooperation activities **(recommendation 6)**.

B. Relations of CSOs with governments

68. United Nations organizations as intergovernmental bodies are responsible to Member States. CEB recalls however, that increased cooperation of the United Nations system with non-State actors at the international level does not diminish in any way interaction with governments.[30] Furthermore, it is also true that CSOs are assuming wider responsibilities as significant partners of governments and the United Nations system, which is guided towards accomplishing its long-standing goals of capacity-building of developing countries.

69. It is recognized that CSOs working in economic and social developments, be they in agriculture, industry, health or education, are important links for governments to gain outreach to the population. In many cases, the people at the grass-roots level or in far away locations are not organized and accessible to development actors. This problem could be tackled by helping local CSOs acquire the capacity needed to carry out development activities, along with the government and the United Nations system. This process could also help the adoption of appropriate legislation and institutional measures for the benefit of CSOs, which are, inter alia, acquiring a wider ground of action while the public sector is withdrawing in favour of the private sector.

70. The involvement of CSOs in designing and approving "plans of action" proposed by national and local authorities, and also their participation in management arrangements, will add to the commitment of all stakeholders and will contribute to the success of the project.

C. The role of the United Nations system in promoting dialogue and cooperation between governments and CSOs

71. Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations states: "The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence.

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[29] *System-wide surveys of experiences and best practices in Civil Society Organization capacity-building and institutional development*," (Capac2doc.Rev.2, para. 5).

[30] ACC/1997/20.

Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned." The spirit of the above article allows the inclusion of CSOs in the arrangements foreseen.

72. The United Nations system is required now more than previously to become the link between governments and CSOs in the area of technical cooperation. Taking advantage of its long-standing experience, the system could draw on best practices to enhance this tripartite relationship and thereby make it beneficial to all concerned. If it transpires that a national authority is reluctant to accept the involvement of a CSO, the United Nations can play the useful role of honest broker to clarify the issue and help to remove the obstacle. In this connection, UNIDO offers an interesting example on how to be an effective facilitator using integrated programmes based on the division of competencies and the agreement of the three actors; namely, the government, the United Nations system, and CSOs. From the inception of the project, these parties are assigned a well-defined sector for their action. UNDP has a rich history of working with CSOs and governments to create such a space. Examples include the role UNDP played in ensuring that indigenous peoples were provided the opportunity to participate in the reconciliation process in Guatemala. Another concrete example is that of the UNEP projects such as the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) and ECOLEX (an initiative to provide global access to environmental law information) where tripartite (UNEP, governments and CSOs) collaboration has been profitable. FAO experience in promoting dialogue and cooperation between governments and NGOs/CSOs takes place at various levels: nationally, in the context of formulating agricultural and food security policies; regionally, through NGO/CSO consultations feeding into FAO regional conferences; and globally, through NGO/CSO participation in FAO technical committees and commissions and special events like the "World Food Summit: Five years later". These selected examples show the increasing role of the United Nations system as an essential link between governments and CSOs in technical cooperation activities.

73. UNDP for its part has issued operational guidelines for involving CSOs in all aspects of the programme planning and evaluation process, while UNICEF has also encouraged the participation of CSOs in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of its programmes, amongst others, the World Summit for Children.

74. The World Bank has its own vision of a process, which puts the country at the centre of its own development in its partnership approach to technical assistance. The approach is to be guided by the country. The government and its people are to develop their own national strategy, of which they have "ownership". The World Bank's vision calls for the development of national communities to assist the country in implementing this strategy. This process is supposed to bring together at various stages all the major actors–the government, the private sector, Civil Society and aid agencies–to discuss, debate, and agree on the development assistance component to support the national development programme. It is envisaged to call at least one meeting a year, convened by the government. The process is referred to as the Development Partner Coalition (DPC). Its output is a development assistance strategy–the government's strategy–developed in consultation with its development partners.[31]

75. The role of CSOs in technical cooperation at all levels of project planning and implementation should be strengthened through broader participation, including decision-making at the policy level. Governments should encourage such participation in order to ensure the success and sustainability of projects. In order to make CSOs fully-fledged partners of United Nations system operations, a mechanism specific to CSOs should be considered along the lines specified in **recommendation 8**.

D. Existing mechanism for technical cooperation among governments, the United Nations system and CSOs

76. The United Nations system at the country level operates mainly through the framework of common country assessments, a process for

[31] *Partnership for Development: Proposed Actions for the World Bank*, a discussion paper of 20 May 1998, p. 17, paras. 43-44.

reviewing and analyzing the national development situation, and UNDAF, a planning and resources framework for the country programmes and projects of agencies of the United Nations (based on CCA) as well as through the United Nations resident coordinator system. "The United Nations country teams, led by United Nations resident coordinators and in close collaboration with Governments and Civil Society, undertake an interdisciplinary analytical process, the common country assessment. The common country assessment examines the national situation and identifies key issues affecting the welfare of people. It also examines national priorities as set by Governments, and uses these as a basis for advocacy and policy dialogue with Governments. Using the common understanding of the causes of poverty generated through the common country assessment process, United Nations country teams then work with Governments to prepare the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAFs), which outline how the United Nations system will respond to national poverty reduction priorities in a strategic manner ... Currently, 84 countries have completed the common country assessment, and 38 have also finalized UNDAFs."[32] It is obvious that the major initiatives at the country level (such as the fight against poverty or against poor health standards), which are part of the overall development strategy, require a concerted effort and a joint response by the system. A partnership with community-based organizations and associations at the national level is therefore indispensable. The United Nations Horn of Africa Initiative, in which FAO is playing the role of focal point, can be cited as a positive example of efforts to involve NGOs/CSOs in problem identification and programme design from the outset **(recommendation 8)**.

77. In the section of the report of the Secretary-General to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly dealing with NGOs, it was indicated that "a project proposal has been submitted to UNDP with the objective of exploring ways in which the competent division and the country offices of UNDP can work together to facilitate the participation of national and subregional NGOs, particularly those from developing countries, in the work of the United Nations in general and the Economic and Social Council in particular".[33] The Inspector fully supports this proposal, and suggests that not only UNDP, and more specifically, the Economic and Social Council, but all agencies of the United Nations system organizations should find similar and appropriate arrangements to also include CSOs in the preparation and execution of economic and social programmes at the country level.

78. Coordinating programme activities at the country level is not an easy task and requires a high level of commitment by all partners involved in the process. It has been the constant concern of the United Nations system to remedy the shortcomings derived from fragmentation and a persistent lack of coordination which have led to duplication and the wasting of resources. Furthermore, these shortcomings put a heavy burden on the often limited managerial capacity of the recipients. The current CCA and UNDAF mechanisms therefore do not seem to take care of the issues sufficiently, nor in particular to respond fully to the new role assigned to CSOs and to their expectations. As stated in the Secretary-General's report, *Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system*,[34] the involvement of national development partners, including Civil Society, in the UNDAF process still appears to be limited. The participation of CSOs is far from being satisfactory, and the majority of resident coordinators acknowledge that further efforts should be made to improve partnership in development programmes with Civil Society.[35] At the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council for 2001, it was also underlined by several Member States that a condition for greater integration of the UNDAF framework in the national development process is wider participation of the national stakeholders in all stages of formulation and implementation, in which CSOs are among those actors considered indispensable.

79. A few recent examples which emerged during a review carried out in connection with the preparation of a JIU report are significant. The material so far gathered for the report being

[32] A/56/326, para. 296.

[33] A/54/520, para. 24.

[34] A/56/320.

[35] Ibid., add.1, para. 97.

prepared (*Extension of technical cooperation projects to end–beneficiaries: case studies in the field of water resources in four African Countries*) points to the fact that operational cooperation between the various United Nations agencies and programmes through the UNDAF process often remains too theoretical or largely incomplete (Madagascar and Zambia were two of the field observations). As suggested in the above-mentioned JIU report, there is need for a more efficient UNDAF that would reflect integrated interventions in the context of joint projects where all the stakeholders, including CSOs, would actively participate in order to maximize the benefits for the targeted communities and to optimize the results of the interventions. Such situations, when existing, underline the inconvenience from which relevant projects are suffering: the lack of convergence between the technical aspects and the participatory approaches which is essential to all the different stages of development programmes (elaboration, implementation, community animation and training) in order to ensure their success.

80. More generally, a renewed approach towards CSOs implies the increased attention of CEB to this issue, to be reflected in its programme of work, along with a revision and amplification of the present mechanism of CCA and UNDAF. In particular, the consultative process with CSOs at the national and subnational levels should be further strengthened and become instrumental in elaborating a streamlined strategy based on essential documents resulting from a common contribution **(recommendation 8).**

E. Training within the context of capacity-building

81. Training and the transfer of knowledge are one of the essential components of technical cooperation and a cornerstone for capacity-building. A priority of the United Nations technical cooperation system has been to train national counterparts to enable them to participate in their own social and economic development, taking into account needs identified by CSOs themselves. To improve performance and to sustain what has been implemented require intensive training. Hence, a well-conceived training programme, included in the designing stages of projects and their implementation, is a guarantee of success. Serious consideration therefore needs to be given to train CSOs working directly with the United Nations system in technical cooperation programmes.

82. The design of such training programmes should include, inter alia, methods of simple bookkeeping; the preparation of concise reports to donors and beneficiaries; and guidelines for accountability and transparency and the evaluation of results. It has been pointed out to the Inspector that one of the limitations of national CSOs, in their becoming fully-fledged partners and counterparts of the United Nations system organizations, is their inadequate knowledge in the areas of programme planning, implementation and follow-up. The United Nations system could be of great assistance in this endeavour to empower and put them on equal footing with their partners.

83. More specifically, training facilities for CSOs should be included in economic and social programmes. The task of training the trainers could be part of this framework. It may happen that the staff of United Nations organizations are not fully prepared to deal with the emerging reality of CSOs. If this is the case, they should be trained on how to tackle this new aspect of technical cooperation. The United Nations Staff College in Turin can be one of the appropriate structures for this purpose as an addition to the training programmes envisaged by each agency **(recommendation 7)**.

F. The role of women in capacity-building

84. The role of women and their essential contribution to economic and social development is a subject which would justify a report of its own and one which cannot be covered within the framework of this review. However, it would be a serious omission not to underline herewith the prominent position that women occupy in Civil Society. They are in fact not only "part and parcel" of the beneficiaries of technical cooperation programmes and projects, but also primary actors in development activities. It has been repeatedly acknowledged by the United Nations system organizations that in developing countries, women are among the pillars of economic and social development and active in a wide spectrum; from

rural initiatives, especially at the local level, to different-sized business enterprises. In many community-based organizations, women are the majority. They are at the front lines dealing with food insecurity and malnourishment, lack of clean water, insufficient or non-existent health care, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, illiteracy and scarce educational opportunities. Women are often in a better condition to reach the "unreachables" in their communities. Furthermore, because of their involvement in the cross-cutting issues of development, women are also key partners of the system in sustaining and preserving the results obtained. It is therefore indispensable that their positions inside CSOs should be recognized and adequately supported at all levels.

85. The United Nations system organizations should assist women in how to get organized and how to involve their representatives in the elaboration and implementation of technical cooperation projects. In one of his opening speeches, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, in relation to gender equality, said that: "Since the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the world better understands the need to free women to become equal participants in development. This is not just a matter of rights but of good economic sense. It is past time to lead by rhetoric; it is time to lead by example."[36]

86. It has to be recognized that if today's educated women are becoming more involved in areas of public management through participation in decision-making process, and in politics and social development, this is partly due to the fact that the United Nations has created worldwide awareness. FAO, ILO, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), IFAD, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), WFP, WHO, The World Bank, the African Centre for Women at ECA, Women in Development in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations/Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) Gender Activities are just some of the United Nations system entities which have undertaken relevant initiatives and have conducted programmes and projects dealing with women; and have posted the relevant information on their web sites. But it is also true that women are still marginalized in many areas of Civil Society. It is therefore timely and appropriate that the contribution of women to economic and social development be adequately recognized, that efforts should be pursued to empower them and to make their role in Civil Society more operational.

87. The preparatory stage of development projects involving Civil Society implies the gathering of information through contact with communities, and the discussion of issues with them individually and collectively. The second stage is to establish links with those who are already working in specific areas of concern, and the third stage is to select a community or a group of people, organized to participate in the design and implementation of programmes and projects. Female presence and participation in technical cooperation programmes are a guarantee of success and should be ensured. Their involvement has to be taken into account, in view of the follow-up to the projects and also the preservation of the results acquired during and after the United Nations presence.

88. The United Nations system organizations dealing with CSOs should place a higher value on the potential of women in general and in developing countries in particular. Action should be oriented towards training and resource mobilization to enhance their organizational and managerial skills and their knowledge of the possibilities offered by the United Nations system so that they can become reliable partners of the Organization in carrying out technical cooperation activities. Member States and donors should also provide financial resources intended for this purpose **(recommendation 5(b))**.

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[36] The National Summit on Africa: Claiming the 21st Century.